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The President's Daily Brief

March 10, 1976

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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LEBANON

The cabinet and parliament were called into emergency sessions yesterday to discuss ways to end the occupation by Muslim army deserters of two military installations close to the Israeli border.

Christian and Muslim leaders are united in their concern that the deserters may spark an incident with Israel, but seem hopelessly divided over how to deal with the mutiny. If it continues for any length of time, it could trigger similar uprisings by Christian soldiers and ultimately draw Syrian-controlled Palestinian troops into direct clashes with Christian forces.

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Damascus is worried that the mutineers' action will encourage further defections, but is still reluctant to face the problem. Both Syria and the Palestinians see certain advantages in the mutineers' challenge to Christian control of the Lebanese army, but have been unable to control the leader of the revolt. Ultimately, the Syrians hope to reorganize the Lebanese army in a way that will diminish Christian control.

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam returned to Beirut yesterday, but he will have little chance to resume negotiations on the formation of a new cabinet until the issue of the mutineers is resolved.

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USSR

Moscow is playing down your decision to avoid the word "detente" and is focusing instead on administration statements that support "relaxed international tension."

Moscow's initial reaction to your statement on "detente" was in a broadcast to North America on March 2 in which the commentator mused that the "unfamiliar" word "detente" had been abused and finally "turned inside out."

Most recently, Soviet commentators have noted that "some" Americans hold that "detente" is an ambiguous term and were moving to strike it from the political dictionary. You and Secretary Kissinger were not linked with this development, but were praised for testifying to the "immutable" course of improving US-Soviet relations.

Soviet listeners were informed that you were avoiding the term "detente" when Moscow yesterday broadcast an account of Secretary Kissinger's interview with US News and World Report.

The Soviets noted the Secretary's assurances that no policy change is involved, and his remark that the administration sees no sensible alternative to building more stable relations with the USSR. They also reported his stress on the need for a new SALT agreement (a theme the Soviets themselves are emphasizing) and his assessment that US policy toward the USSR since 1969 has been successful.

Soviet commentaries do contain some somber overtones. For example, Moscow quoted Secretary Kissinger's statement that the US is dealing with an "irreconcilable ideology" and that the Soviet Union will not abandon support for national liberation movements in the name of friendly relations.

An earlier Soviet commentary also referred to "certain US circles" which were bent on replacing "detente" with "power politics."

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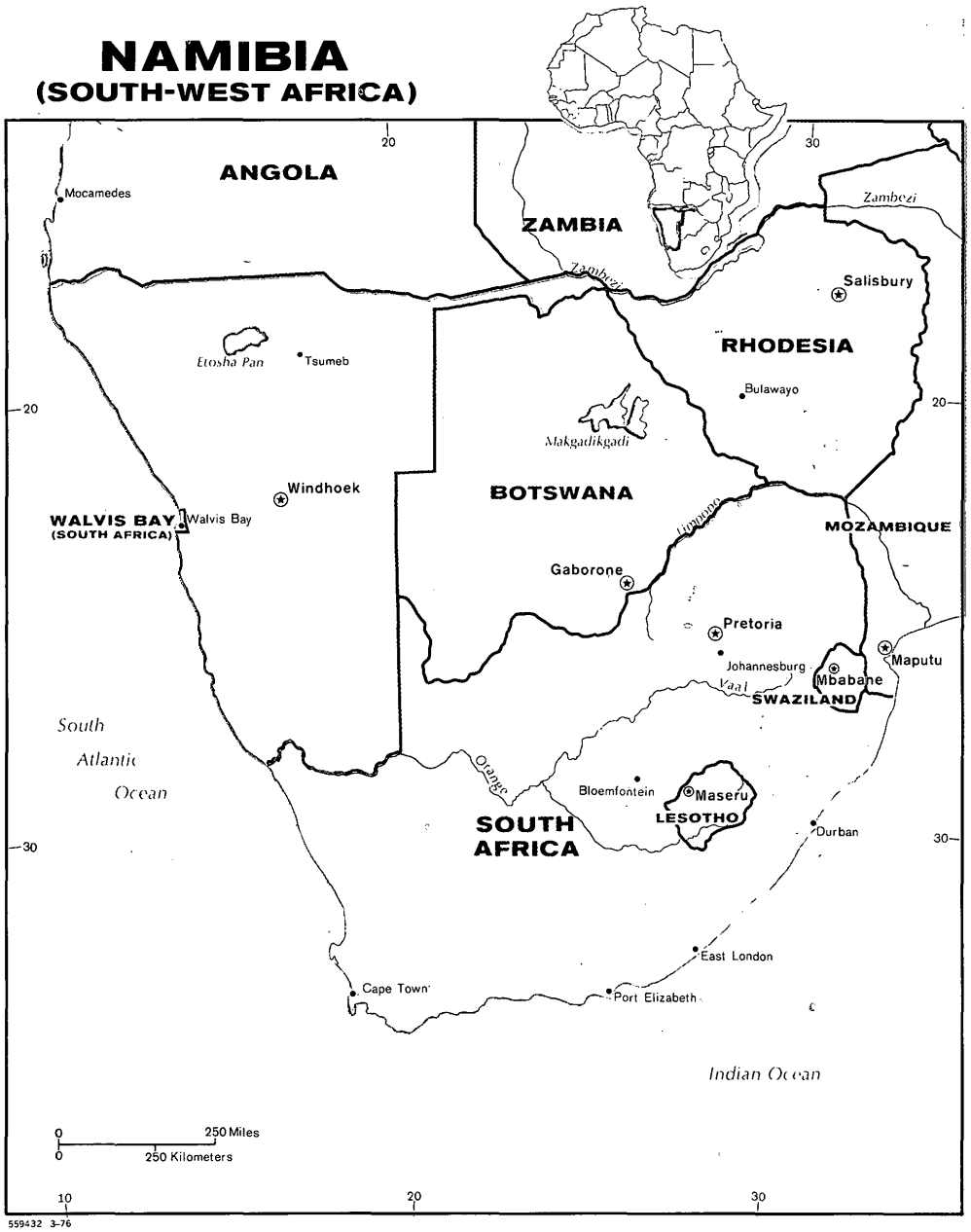
NAMIBIA
(SOUTH-WEST AFRICA)



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SOUTHERN AFRICA

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* * *

Zaire *and* Zambia [redacted]

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25X1

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[redacted]

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USSR-ALGERIA-MOROCCO

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] *Moscow continues to support self-determination for Western Sahara but wants Algeria to find a peaceful settlement to the dispute.* 25X1

In line with this advice, Moscow has handled cautiously the proclamation of the "Saharan Democratic Arab Republic" by the Algerian-backed Polisario guerrillas. The Soviets have publicly noted the declaration, but their media have also reported Moroccan opposition to the move. [redacted] 25X1 Perhaps in pique, Algeria summoned home its ambassador to the USSR before the Soviet party congress. In addition, its delegate to the congress returned to Algiers to consult Boumediene before conferring with Soviet leaders.

Moroccan Prime Minister Osman, on the other hand, has told US officials that he was pleased by his discussions with Kosygin last month in Moscow. Kosygin evidently told Osman that Boumediene is out on a limb and that a way should be found to take him off it without embarrassment.

Moscow would probably like to continue to avoid choosing sides in the conflict. The USSR might support the Algerian position more strongly, however, if--despite Soviet desires--the Western Sahara situation deteriorates into a shooting war.

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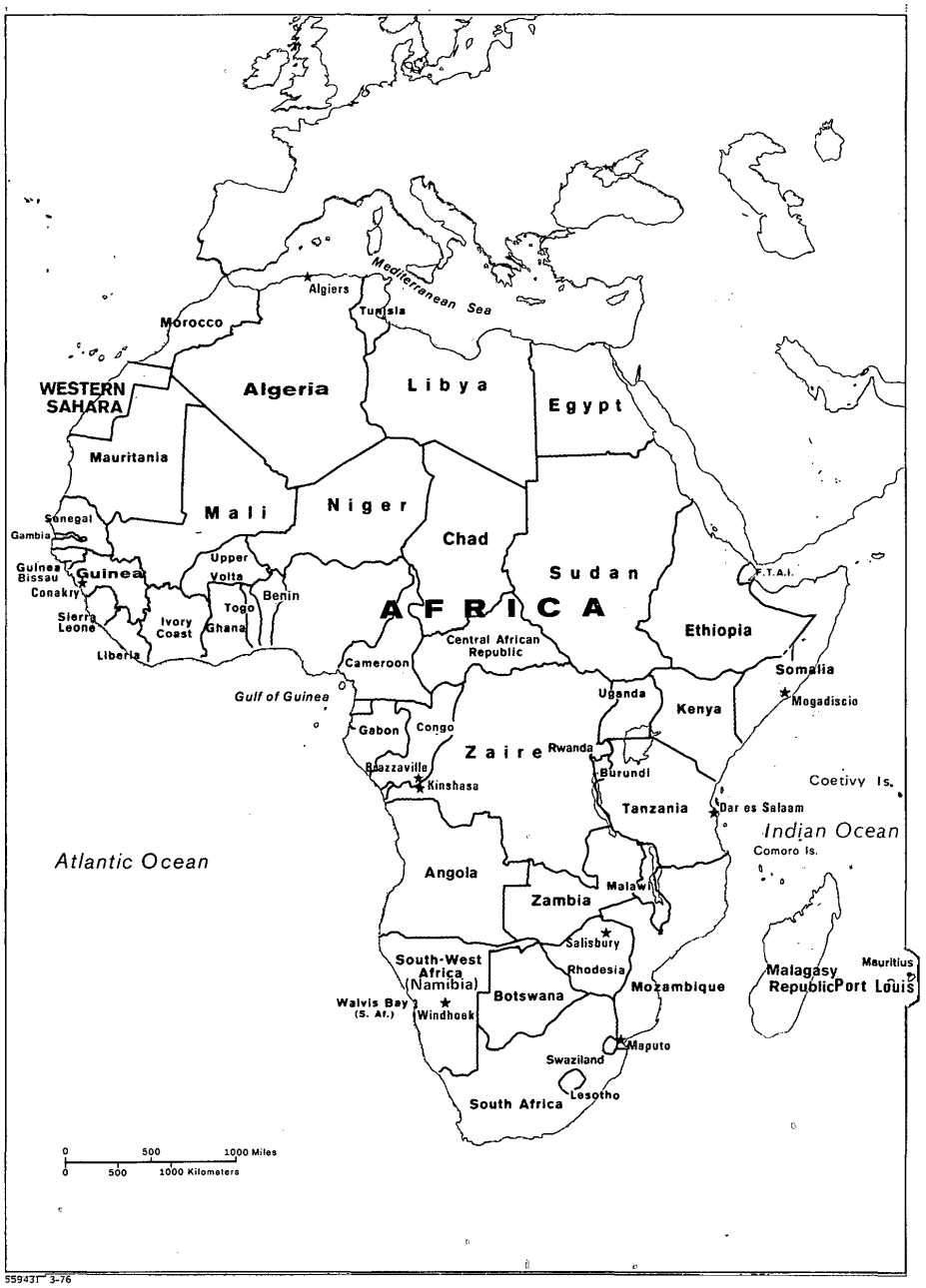

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NOTES

The Soviet *naval group in the Indian Ocean--composed of a destroyer, a landing ship, a support ship, and an oiler--is moving south from its anchorage near Coetivy Island.*

The contingent may be planning a port call at Port Louis in Mauritius, which will celebrate its independence day on Friday.

On the other side of Africa, a Soviet F-class torpedo attack submarine--probably from the Mediterranean--has entered the port at Conakry. This is the second time this year that a Soviet submarine has visited Conakry; a J-class submarine was there briefly at the end of February. A Soviet Kresta-class cruiser and a landing ship are now there, too, and a destroyer and a merchant oiler are in the Gulf of Guinea.

* * *

Somali *President Siad reiterated his commitment to self-determination for the* French Territory of the Afars and the Issas *in the course of his speech earlier this month at the 25th Soviet party congress in Moscow.*

We believe that Siad's goal is the complete and immediate withdrawal of French forces and the replacement of the present head of the territorial council, who is Paris' choice for future leadership, by a pro-Somali official. The incorporation of the territory into Somalia also is a near-term objective of Siad's.

Siad most likely used his trip to the congress to solicit Moscow's support for his policies in the Horn of Africa and to convince the Soviets of his need for military hardware. In the past, Moscow reportedly has cautioned Siad to do nothing rash, but rather to rely on political pressure and subversion to achieve his ends.

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Mexican

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seizure of illicit drugs.

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